

The President's Railway Bill.

One of the features of President Taft's railway bill came to a vote in the Senate on the 29th, upon an amendment offered by Senator Cummins (Insurgent Republican), which was defeated. This bill, as approved in advance by the President, permits railroads to make pooling agreements with one another. By his amendment Senator Cummins proposed that such agreements which are now illegal, should not be legalized without the approval in each case of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Just before the vote Senator La Follette (Insurgent Republican) made a vigorous speech in favor of the Cummins amendment. He stated that the corporations had begun long ago to lay the foundation for the present legislation, which, he declared, was an attempt to repeal the anti-trust law completely, so far as it applied to the railroads. "The great organizations first enlisted men of soft fiber but eminent respectability," he said, "to propagate throughout this country a sentiment that would warrant an amendment breaking down the wise provisions of the Sherman anti-trust law,"—an allusion to the Civic Federation,—and in the course of his speech he gave this political warning:

There is an aroused public sentiment that will not be diverted. The people will not be misrepresented in Congress much longer, nor are they going to blindly follow some political leader. If the Republican party is to continue to command any respect it must free itself from the leadership that has controlled legislation in both branches of Congress.

All the Democrats present and the following Republicans voted for the Cummins amendment: Beveridge, Borah, Bristow, Burkett, Clapp, Cummins, Dixon, Dolliver, Gamble, La Follette, Nelson. But it was defeated by 35 to 29.

+

In the House, the Insurgent Republicans and the Democrats who, working together, make a majority, have amended the bill in many respects. Their amendments are understood to weaken it as a corporation measure, and a long deadlock with the Senate has been predicted in consequence. Later news from Washington, however, is to the effect that the President's support is breaking down in both houses.

+ +

Senator Lorimer's Election Questioned.

An accusation of bribery in connection with the election of William Lorimer (Republican) as Senator from Illinois (vol. xii, p. 537), in place of Senator Hopkins (Republican) who had been recommended by popular vote, was made sensationally and exclusively by the Chicago Tribune on the 30th. The accusation so far as then disclosed rested upon the testimony of a Democratic

member of the legislature, Charles A. White. Circumstances have since been published by the Tribune as confirmatory. Mr. White states with circumstantial detail that he was paid \$1,000 to vote for Mr. Lorimer, and that the Democratic leader, Lee O'Neil Browne, made the bargain with him and afterwards paid him the money. Also, from asserted conversations with Mr. Browne and others, Mr. White regarded several other members whom he names as having been bribed in the same way and for the same price. His story included the further statement that upon Browne's suggestion and a telegram from Robert E. Wilson, also a member of the legislature, he had gone to St. Louis to get his share of the legislative "jackpot" (a fund for division among bribed members in consideration of their general fidelity to corrupting business interests during the session), and that there he met several members on the same errand, all of whom he supposed were paid as he was. As to his own share of this "jackpot" he states that it amounted to \$900 and was paid him by Mr. Wilson. Mr. White explains that in taking the money and voting for Mr. Lorimer his purpose was to cleanse the legislature by exposing its corruption.

+

Mr. Browne denounces Mr. White's story as absolutely false, and characterizes it as the climax of an attempt at blackmail. Mr. Wilson denies that he ever paid White or any one else bribe money, and asserts that he never sent the telegram purporting to come from him to White to meet him at St. Louis. Senator Lorimer makes this statement:

The White statement is absolutely false from start to finish. It is a lie on the face of it. What is the matter with White is beyond me. What is the matter with the people behind him—the Chicago Tribune—is easier to tell. They are trying, by deliberately lying, to wreck the financial institutions which I am known to be starting—[the LaSalle Street National Bank and the trust company connected with it.]

Grand jury investigations are being made. But in this connection serious complaints are made that these investigations are being pushed forward in some directions only, in order to prevent investigation in others.

+ +

Another Charge of Legislative Corruption.

A day or two before the Lorimer accusations were published, a lawsuit brought in behalf of John C. Fetzer, a Chicago business man of large interests, has led to accusations of colossal bribery of the Illinois legislature and the Chicago City Council. An arbitration before ex-Judge E. C. Field had resulted in an award by the arbitrator on March 18, 1910, in